



# **The United States Conference of Mayors**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **2005 CITY LIVABILITY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED** *Seattle, Trenton Receive Top Honors*

**Chicago, IL (June 11, 2005)** — Mayors Gregory J. Nickels of Seattle (WA), and Douglas H. Palmer of Trenton (NJ), have been awarded First Place honors in the 2005 City Livability Awards Program, sponsored by The U.S. Conference of Mayors and Waste Management.

The Awards recognize and honor mayors for exemplary leadership in developing and implementing programs that improve the quality of life in America's cities. An independent panel of judges, selected by The U.S. Conference of Mayors, determined the winning cities from a pool of 151 applicants based on three criteria: mayoral leadership, creativity and innovation, and broad impact on the quality of life for residents.

Outstanding Achievement Awards for cities with populations of 100,000 or more were received by Mayors Jane Campbell of Cleveland; Rhine L. McLin of Dayton; Loretta Spencer of Huntsville; and Frank C. Otis of Pembroke Pines. Outstanding Achievement Awards were also given to mayors of cities with populations of 100,000 or fewer people: Mayors Michael A. Guido of Dearborn; John Ostermiller of Littleton (CO); T. Oscar Trevino, Jr. of North Richland Hills (TX); and Sandra A. Cicirelli of Westland (MI).

Honorable Mention Citations were awarded for cities with populations of 100,000 or more to: Mayors Martin J. Chavez of Albuquerque; Jim Dailey of Little Rock; Manuel A. Diaz of Miami; David N. Cicilline of Providence; and Ross 'Rocky' C. Anderson of Salt Lake City. Mayors of cities with populations of less than 100,000 receiving Honorable Mentions are Angel L. Malave Zayas of Cidra (PR); Donald D. Slesnick, II of Coral Gables (FL); C. Nelson Harris of Roanoke (VA); David J. Jones of St. Joseph (MO) and John J. Duran of West Hollywood (CA).

The City Livability Awards were presented at the Conference of Mayors' Annual Luncheon by Mr. Barry Caldwell, Senior Vice President, Governmental Affairs and Corporate Communications of Waste Management, the nation's largest provider of waste management services. Waste Management's support makes the City Livability Awards Program possible.

"Waste Management has enjoyed a great relationship over the years, with The U.S. Conference of Mayors. It's always a pleasure to sponsor the City Livability awards," said Caldwell. "Just like the winning cities being honored today, Waste Management takes its commitment to serving communities seriously. We applaud this year's winners and commend them on their efforts to make their cities and communities a better place to live."

Tom Cochran, Executive Director of The U.S. Conference of Mayors added, "Our City Livability Awards Program gives the Conference a chance to express our pride in cities' determined leadership in making urban areas safer, cleaner and more livable. We are grateful to Waste Management for its support of the City Livability Awards Program, and for the opportunity to showcase the talent and commitment of mayors and city governments across the country."

Following are brief quotes from the panel of judges regarding the winning programs:

## **LARGE CITIES**

### **First Place**

SEATTLE - "Mayor Nickel's Climate Protection Initiative is a multi-faceted program to improve quality of life in Seattle and at the same time combat global warming," said the judges. "This program serves as a model that any city can use, and if every city did use would be a huge benefit for the environment." The initiative weaves together efforts to reduce global warming pollution from city government operations (for example, the municipally owned electric utility's commitment to zero net greenhouse gas emissions) with efforts to reduce community-wide emissions (for example, aggressive "smart growth" policies and strategies to reducing urban sprawl and car -dependency).

### **Outstanding Achievement**

CLEVELAND - "Sparx in the City is a downtown marketing initiative in Cleveland that is serving as a catalyst for stimulating vibrant street life and economic activity," observed one judge. This community effort continues to engage area residents, visitors and workers in a way that instills pride, encourages spending, and creates a buzz about downtown at the sidewalk level. This has brought vitality back to the central city and could be replicated in cities across the country."

DAYTON - "The City of Dayton's Brownfield Redevelopment Program, under the leadership of Mayor McLin, works to change perceptions of the city by providing

development ready land where before there was aged, underutilized industrial facilities,” observed the judges. “This program shows what can be accomplished by bringing together relevant segments of the community to address a common need of older industrial cities. They didn’t just talk about this problem in Dayton, they tackled it head-on with significant projects.”

HUNTSVILLE - “The City of Huntsville’s Homeless Camp Clean-Up Program is an innovative and cost effective method to significantly change some of the most unsightly areas of a community through the combined efforts of beautification/litter reduction groups, law enforcement, homeless advocates and inmate labor,” said the judges. “This program made people at the bottom feel they could be responsible citizens as well. It is a humane way of dealing with a problem that faces every city.”

PEMBROKE PINES - “The Pembroke Pines Charter School System was founded as a proactive response to surging population growth and an overburdened school district,” observed one judge. “This is a very creative program that addresses a very serious societal problem – a good example of thinking outside the box. There was a tremendous mobilization of resources with an extremely successful result.”

## **Honorable Mention**

ALBUQUERQUE - “The Party Patrol contributes not only to quieter neighborhoods and safer streets, but is a model for the rest of the country,” said one judge. “This shows a much higher level of commitment to address the teen drinking problem which has become a growing concern nationwide.”

LITTLE ROCK - “I’m impressed by the level of commitment by the medical community in Little Rock to take advantage of a national resource to raise the level of community health,” said one judge. “The development of the Arkansas River trail benefited not only outdoor recreation enthusiasts, but also served as a significant public health resource for patients of the state’s 24-physician cardiology practice, Heart Clinic Arkansas, through the establishment of the Medical Mile Project – an innovative preventative measure.”

MIAMI - “The Heart of Our Parks initiative fulfills the vision of Miami’s Mayor Manuel Diaz to spotlight city parks as communal meeting places where the entire family can enjoy music, athletics, arts and special events,” said the panel of judges. “His extraordinary leadership and vision in bringing quality cultural programs to Miami residents, most notably those low-income children not normally exposed to them, is commendable and worthy of recognition.”

PROVIDENCE - “The Neighborhood Performing Arts Initiative brought 50 extraordinary free performances of theatre, art, music and dance to Providence’s ball fields, playgrounds, sitting parks, street corners, historic squares, recreation centers, school cafeterias, the Zoo, and a water park, in an effort to ensure access to a rich array of arts programs to all residents,” said the panel of judges. “Mayor Cicilline’s commitment

to end the inequity that often limits arts programs to middle- and upper-income residents led to the creation of this program and his leadership in this effort is outstanding.”

**SALT LAKE CITY** - Salt Lake City’s Bridging the Religious Divide program is designed to bring people from different faith and cultural backgrounds together for an honest, open dialogue regarding issues of common interest and issues causing division, giving Salt Lake City residents a meaningful opportunity to get to know people from different religions, cultural and social backgrounds, and the tools to discuss these differences,” observed the panel of judges. “Mayor Rocky Anderson has tapped into what has become a global problem, and his insistence that the program involve people at the grassroots and neighborhood level, rather than relying on the more traditional “top-down” approach, reveal a true leadership worthy of recognition.”

## **SMALL CITIES**

### **First Place**

**TRENTON** - “Mayor Doug Palmer’s Youth Advocacy Cabinet has maintained its initial focus on improving the access and equity of youth enrichment programs, and taken on the additional critical task of improving youth violence and gang prevention, intervention and enforcement services,” observed the panel of judges. “Directed by the mayor to employ systemic, research-based problem solving approaches on behalf of youth, the Cabinet has grown in its role and now continuously identifies and addresses the most severe challenges faced by youth and their families. This mayor has shown true leadership and this valuable program deserves recognition.” The Youth Advocacy Cabinet’s responsibility is to set broad policies and ensure follow-up implementation. As a who’s-who of youth programming stakeholders in the community, the cabinet is positioned to identify best practices and leverages resources.

### **Outstanding Achievement**

**DEARBORN** - “Dearborn’s Ford Community & Performing Arts Center is the fruit of an ambitious vision led by Mayor Michael A. Guido to create a facility five times the size of its predecessor, so that the diverse but tight-knit community could come together under one roof to enjoy the spectrum of amenities and programs suiting their differing lifestyles and interests,” said the judges. “Despite many challenges along the way, Dearborn has achieved its goal of creating a one-of-a-kind facility that will continue to enhance quality of life and make memories for generations.

**LITTLETON** - “The Greater Littleton Youth Initiative, created in response to the tragedy at Columbine High School, brings the city, public schools, parks and recreation, chamber of commerce, judicial officials, the sheriff’s department, citizens, and a range of agencies and organizations together to create a strategic approach to enhance the development of young people and try to prevent youth violence,” noted the judges. “Littleton is the only community in the nation to have implemented so many scientifically documented programs in their search for proven effective solutions to the problems of young people.”

**NORTH RICHLAND HILLS** - “The Neighborhood Initiative Program strives to improve North Richland Hills neighborhoods through promoting basic property maintenance, establishing higher community standards and encouraging increased community investment,” said one judge. “The program encourages a strong partnership and participation between government, businesses, churches and volunteers to enhance the quality of life in their community.”

**WESTLAND** - “The City of Westland Fire Department, at the direction of Mayor Sandra Cicirelli, initiated the Fire Safe Neighborhood Program that has firefighters go door-to-door in each neighborhood and provide a fire and life safety inspection of every residence,” explained one City Livability judge. “They offer to provide and install safety improvements such as smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, 9-1-1 indicator lights and grab bars for the handicapped which as purchased through Fire Department fundraising efforts. This is a comprehensive and complete approach to fire safety and should be replicated nationwide.”

## **Honorable Mention**

**CIDRA** - “Mayor Malave Zayas saw that there was a great need in Cidra for programs catering to special needs children to develop not only their physical skills, but their mental and social skills as well. His development of the Little League Baseball ‘Challenger League’ for these children shows his leadership in providing quality programs to ALL of Cidra’s residents,” said the panel of judges. “The fact that 48 percent of the eligible children participate in this league shows that the mayor has successfully filled a great need in his community.”

**CORAL GABLES** - Mayor Slesnick’s Traffic Calming Program has successfully reduced cut-through and speeding traffic in Coral Gables’ single-family neighborhoods while creating and maintaining attractive design elements reminiscent of old Europe,” observed one judge. “Residents build consensus with fellow neighbors to confirm acceptance of the design solution contemplated and funding comes from city-wide sources rather than local assessments to ensure that improvements are placed where they are most necessary, not most easily afforded. This is truly a model for other cities to follow.”

**ROANOKE** - “With the distinction of being the first free, wireless Internet access (Wi-Fi) zone in Virginia, Mayor Harris is a leader in technological innovation for his community,” observed one judge. “Roanoke has expanded digital and wireless capabilities to attract more people through the technology available in the heart of the city, and to meet the growing needs of business patrons, students, residents and visitors. In doing so, the city has not only provided this vital, free service but has also promoted its downtown, which is part of a broader economic development goal – a true win-win situation.”

**ST. JOSEPH** - “The RIDE – St. Joseph’s public transit service – offers equal service to physically challenged and able-bodied persons alike, with flexibility and access for its

customers based on personal preference rather than physical ability,” noted the panel of judges. “One of three cities nationwide to operate such a service, this program offers reliability on fixed and curbside service and should be a model for the nation to follow.”

WEST HOLLYWOOD - “In an effort to meet a California law mandating each city divert 50 percent of its solid waste from landfills, West Hollywood implemented an innovative program to recycle restaurant food waste,” the panel of judges explains. “Mayor Duran has a strong environmental ethic and this program has half of all restaurants citywide participating in the food waste recycling program – fully 80 percent of the waste generated by these restaurants is recycled! This is a proven effort to strive towards California’s ultimate goal of ‘zero waste’ and deserves recognition.”

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